

**SPECIAL MEETING
BUDGET WORKSHOP
April 23, 2012**

The Wethersfield Town Council held a special meeting on Monday, April 23, 2012 at 6:00 p.m. in the Police Department Community Room, 250 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield, CT.

Present: Councilors Drake, Hurley, Kotkin, Manousos, McAlister, Roberts, Deputy Mayor Console, and Chairperson Hemmann

Also present: Jeff Bridges, Town Manager; RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant Town Manager; Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk; Chandler Rose, Tax Assessor; Marlene Desjardins, Tax Collector; James Cetran, Chief of Police; Paul Dudley, Data Services; Kathy Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation; Nancy Stillwell, Director of Social and Youth Services; Mike Turner, Director of Physical Services; Ellen Walsh – Analyst, Police Department; Dennis Colclough – Manager, IT, Board of Education

Absent: Councilor Montinieri

Chairperson Hemmann called the special meeting to order.

ASSESSOR

Chandler Rose spoke of the 2.7% salary, insurance, use QVS services, printing the grand list. He noted that the pension cost that is distributed by the department was switched over from municipals to QVS and is going well and noted the good response time with QVS. The Assessor and Collector stated that it worked better for them than municipals. Chandler noted that the 2013 is the next revaluation and asked if it was in this budget? Jeff Bridges replied that it was in the CNEF budget. She stated that the Board of Tax Appeals is better this year and that they are now able to hold meetings with three members from the board. She reported that the number of responses received to the revaluation was five and that the 6th vendor has too much work for that year.

TAX COLLECTOR

Marlene Desjardins reported about the increases in printing. She stated that increases are due to the annual fee of \$3,200 in support services and increase the number of billings up to 30,000. All payments are made on-line, on a daily basis, rather than only on the weekend.

Department of Motor Vehicle collections charge, budget \$6,000; get back more personal property tax. 3/31 99 % better than last year. 818 coming off hard 0 year, going up to steps, etc.

POLICE

Jim Cetran reported pretty much the same; the need for shelving for records and how they need to hold records for 10 years. To alleviate the problem for a few years, he is asking for \$10,000. He added that there is more general paperwork these days and that they do not scan and are unable to convert to digital. Chief Cetran also noted that the FICA health benefit changed from last year. Sue Smith noted that they split it out this year. Mention was made of training costs at \$1,500 per candidate and in-service training \$100 - \$300. Chief Cetran added that the police department was also in need of some equipment and requested the purchase of two new sniper rifles at \$2,510 each. He further reported that the State Lab lost accreditation. He noted that they want to get a fuming hood, for fingerprinting allow us to do rather than wait 2 years; stalker radar unit. He requested the purchase of another speed machine to help enforce speeding in the neighborhoods and stated that using selective enforcement costs money when no one comes along. With the machine, we can leave it for a week, then do selective enforcement. He stated that they share one with five communities and have only one in-house; \$4,000; have two license readers. He also noted that there was no increase for sworn police officers.

CENTRAL OFFICES SERVICES

Chairperson Hemmann reported that some services have decreased and as a result more was budgeted than needed and will take action to reduce it. She reported that some decreases were due to fiber optic service lines removed, utilizing a full year with the IPADs; a \$5,621 reduction. it comes out of tax bills go out in June but there is a \$15,000 credit for previous vendor. She stated that Pitney Bowes vendor has a reserve in postage being held for us. Paul Dudley and Dennis Colclough proposed changes in the fiber optic build out for the town buildings. They stated how the town has outgrown services and internet access and that the phone system is 20 years old. Chairperson Hemmann explained that fiber optic will lay groundwork for new connect to all buildings and the high school. She stated that the town shares assets and there is redundancy between the two and that there is a potential for sharing services. She expressed the need for installing new equipment such as two new firewalls with a digital back office and better technology. She explained that there would be a one-time fee \$22.00 in CNEF, radio towers would be \$49,000 for part already in the budget. She stated that the Library already has it and that education and library was paid for by state grants. She added that the Police Department and Fire Department were also paid for by state grants. Chairperson Hemmann noted that this project would lay the foundation for anything we want to do tomorrow. Projections changed from original budget and the cost is based on distance, change orders, large project, etc. interface between schools and town, Wethersfield High School hub of network and town hall is a hub and will link the Wethersfield High School and Town Hall and it will become a giant hub Connecticut. If the referendum passes, Wethersfield High School will be a shelter.

RADIO

Chairperson Hemmann and Dave Scales reported 20-22 hours a week, trunk system, five frequencies among department, create a talking system to health or fire department and would create a rapid intervention team. They stated that tower rentals offset the cost of this department and added that the system was between eight and nine years old. They stated that Microwaves may be replaced by fiber; \$360,000 for radio reserve have there been less problems with rebanding; tower or different solutions; to keep current and we may need another tower. They added that if we go digital we might not need another tower.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Kathy Bagley reported on the Memorial Day Committee. Kathy spoke of major increases in line items salaries 2 + step; training budget and the need to certify a Playground Director every three years. Professional Parks certified Kathy Bagley, Sal Cucia and Marty Sitler are all certified. She stated that the Red Cross Lifeguard Instruction has gone up. She noted that the town plumber has been certified as a pool plumber and that the State requires a certified pool guy, therefore, the plumber had to go for a course, take a test, and pass in order to become certified. Kathy reported that the water charge is up, and that the Metropolitan District's fees are up because of the fields, 26 % water fees. She also reported that the Willard Pool filter tanks are done and stated that some other items will get done sooner rather than later. Kathy noted that the Nature Center has \$29,000; and their goal is to be self sustaining. She asked for additional funds taking money out of the savings, build and generate more revenue to replace it. She added if enrollment is at 85 %, they can be self sufficient. Kathy reported that they would like to bring in some new programs and that they are trying to rent out facilities. Friends of Nature Center will raise money to offset the expenses and suggested to possibly market to out of towners. She questioned the CIP budget for Cove Park docks? Grant for next three years, 25,000 for a match for the building grants. Next year budget to get it started. Kathy asked about the Tennis courts at Webb and the potential costs to tear it down or take the fence down and questioned if it was being used as tennis? She noted that the port-a-potty needs to remain there for baseball, football, etc. She added that we need to either take it out, or improve it for \$395,000.

SOCIAL AND YOUTH SERVICES

Nancy Stiwell reported that she is looking for more hours for a part-time Social Worker and that she runs out of hours. She noted that she added an additional 150 hours more which would be an increase of \$5,000 plus benefits increase. She reported that Dial-a-Ride had fewer complaints, She noted that Curtain is new company and is easy to work with and provides good service. She also noted that in this budget the financial analyst combines Sal Cucia from Parks and Recreation and Social and Youth Services. Nancy stated that the number of people applying for energy applications are up and that food bank visitors were up. She noted that volunteers are needed for supervising clients so that people do not walk in food bank. She added that they are still getting food from food share. Nancy noted that they received 15,000 anonymous donations for oil and gas. Audit 6-30 audits in June 30 financial see new one which collapses three funds; in budget

section F physical services; last year of contract 2% =+step, next year last year of contract professional services; storm water egress water charge big; She noted that custodial services have exterminating fees also. Other items of noted were that the outside generators need a monitor. The pest control amount is \$3,500 of the \$35,719. She added that refuse collections will be going up 3% and discussed recycling, opportunities, effect of residential recycling; increase in recycling less solid waste; tier program; out to bid on fuels and lubricants; heating oil 1 \$8,576; bid diesel and unleaded. She also noted some IT and software increases and suggested adding global position systems to monitor speeds and where the people are. On the revenue side, she briefly discussed transfer station fees of \$5 per year and refuse disposal fees and brush disposal.

CNEF

Jeff Bridges briefly discussed Section E-1 in plain red book.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:00 p.m., Deputy Mayor Console moved "**TO ADJOURN THE MEETING,**" seconded by Councilor McAlister. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano
Town Clerk
Approved by Vote of Council
May 7, 2012